IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please amend page 4, line 13 to page 5, line 2 to read as follows:

The present invention includes a method of preparing an ~~imadizolium~~ imidazolium salt comprising providing (as by synthesizing) a diimine compound and subjecting the diimine compound to ring closure conditions. The diimine compound is preferably from the group consisting of 1, 3, diaryldiazabutadiene, 1, 3, dialkyldiazabutadiene, and 1, 3, arylalkyldiazabutadiene; and paraformaldehyde and a protic acid (such as HCl, HBF_4, or HPF_6, and preferably HCl) preferably provide the ring closure conditions. The diimine compound can be **1**, in which case the salt is **2**; the diimine compound can be **3**, in which case the salt is **4** (**4** is also an embodiment of the present invention); the diimine compound can be 1, 3, arylalkyldiazabutadiene (in which case the salt produced is also an embodiment of the present invention). Preferably, the diimine compound is subjected to ring closure conditions at or below room temperature. The salt preferably includes a counterion, and the counterion is determined by the acid used for ring closure. The diimine compound can be synthesized at room temperature.

Please amend page 5, lines 8-16 to read as follows:

The present invention includes the ~~imadizolium~~ imidazolium salt 1,3-Bis(2,6-diisopropylphenyl)imidazolium chloride.

The present invention includes a method of preparing an ~~imadizolium~~ imidazolium salt comprising providing a diimine compound from the group consisting of **1** and **3**, mixing the diimine compound with a solvent from the group consisting of: methanol, ethyl acetate, ethanol, tetrahydrofuran, and toluene; and at or below room temperature, mixing the diimine compound and solvent with paraformaldehyde and a protic acid. When the diimine compound is **1**, the salt is **2**; when the diimine compound is **3**, the salt is **4**.